

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 LILONG 00569 180605Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01 ICA-11 HA-05 /065 W
-----053216 181928Z /72
R 171432Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1805

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LILONGWE 0569

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SHUM, PDIP, OVIP, MI (BANDA, H. KAMUZU)

REF: A. LILONGWE 0560; B LILONGWE 0545

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. AT AIRPORT SATURDAY MORNING, APRIL 15, I WAS CALLED FROM VIEWING STAND, WHERE PRE-DEPARTURE CEREMONIES WERE TAKING PLACE IN HONOR OF PRESIDENT BANDA, TO SEPAK WITH GOV. TEMBO. GOV. TEMBO SAID HE WISHED TO TALK WITH ME ABOUT THE CASE OF AUSTIN MBISA. HE THEN RELATED THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF EVENTS AS HE HAD BEEN ABLE TO ASCERTAIN THEM FOLLOWING OUR TELEPHONE CONVERSATION (REF A). HE SAID AUSTIN MBISA HAD BEEN CLEARED TO GO TO HIS POSITION AT CHANCELLOR COLLEGE IN ZOMBA AND HAD REPORTED TO THE UNIVERSITY ON FEB 6. AT THAT TIME, IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, HE BECAME AWARE OF THE FACT THAT THERE WAS A LETTER IN HIS FILE IN WHICH HE HAD INDICATED ONE REASON HE WAS ASKING FOR A CONTINUANCE OF HIS STAY IN THE U.S. WAS BECAUSE OF THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY AND ITS EFFECT ON THE UNIVERSITY. FINDING THAT THE UNIVERSITY HAD A COPY OF THIS LETTER UPSET HIM GREATLY AND HE DECLARED THAT HE WISHED TO SPEAK TO THE POLICE ABOUT IT. HE RETURNED TO THE HOSTEL AND SPOKE TO A REPRESENTATIVE OF SPECIAL BRANCH AT THE HOSTEL. HE WAS QUESTIONED BRIEFLY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 LILONG 00569 180605Z

BUT NOT TAKEN INTO CUSTODY AND THE AUTHORITIES SUBSEQUENTLY DECIDED THAT THE MATTER WAS NOT SERIOUS AS THE LETTER WAS WRITTEN AT A TIME WHEN THERE HAD BEEN DETENTIONS OF FACULTY MEMBERS FOR POLITICAL REASONS. TEMBO SAID HE HAD BEEN TOLD THAT MBISA BECAME VERY UPSET AND DISTRAUGHT AND HAD ACTED VERY STRONGLY THE FOLLOWING DAY. IN THE MORNING OF WEDNESDAY, FEB 8, AN EMPLOYEE OF THE HOSTEL FOUND HE

HAD HUNG HIMSELF IN HIS ROOM. TEMBO SAID THAT, AS CHAIRMAN OF THE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL, HE WAS DISTRESSED TO LEARN OF THIS SUICIDE. HE ADDED THAT ONE OF AUSTIN'S RELATIVES WHO IS A MEMBER OF THE POLICE FORCE HAD INDICATED TO THE POLICE THAT IN THE PAST OTHER MEMBERS OF THE MBISA FAMILY HAVE SHOWN EMOTIONAL INSTABILITY AND HAVE COMMITTED SUICIDE. HE SAID THAT HE HAS ASKED THE MALAWI POLICE COMMISSIONER, KAMWANA, TO PUT TOGETHER A FULL AND DETAILED REPORT OF THE CASE AND SEND IT TO PRESIDENT BANDA IN LONDON. FROM THERE HE IMPLIED THAT A REPORT WILL BE SENT TO AMB. MUWAMBA IN THE U.S. END UNCLASSIFIED.

2. BEGIN LOU. COMMENT: AS PRESIDENT BANDA WAS JUST ABOUT READY TO BEGIN HIS SPEECH, I HAD NO OPPORTUNITY TO QUESTION GOV. TEMBO FURTHER. IT WAS CLEAR TO ME THAT HE HAD NOT MENTIONED THE MATTER TO PRESIDENT BANDA AS I HAD URGED AND REQUESTED HIM TO DO SOME INCONSISTENCIES AND DISCREPANCIES ARE APPARENT RE SOME DETAILS OF THE CASE AS IT IS KNOWN TO US SO FAR. IN MY OPINION, THIS IS PROBABLY DUE TO A VERY TRADITIONAL CUSTOM OF TRYING TO SHUNT ASIDE OR BURY EMBARRASSING MATTERS AND, EVEN MORE, TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT ALL THOSE INVOLVED, AND PARTICULARLY THE POLICE COMMISSIONER AND JOHN NGWIRI, WERE HORRIFIED TO LEARN THAT THIS CASE TOUCHED UPON THE UNIV. OF INDIANA AND THAT PRESIDENT BANDA HAD NEVER BEEN INFORMED OF IT. I, MYSELF, AM REASONABLY PERSUADED THAT WE HAVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 LILONG 00569 180605Z

THE ESSENTIAL FACTS OF THE CASE FOR OUR PURPOSES, I.E., THAT MBISA'S DEATH WAS A SUICIDE; THAT HE WAS NOT PHYSICALLY MISTREATED IN ANY WAY BEFORE HE TOOK THIS STEP; AND THAT, ALTHOUGH IT IS A TRAGEDY FOR HIS FAMILY, HIS FRIENDS, AND A SAD LOSS FOR HIS COUNTRY, HIS DEATH DOES NOT INVOLVE A QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. STEVENSON

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL REPRESSION, DEATHS, STUDENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LILONG00569
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: D780166-0341
Format: TEL
From: LILONGWE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780450/aaaabqbs.tel
Line Count: 101
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 58f627ad-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 LILONGWE 560
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2948684
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CHANGED> VJT 20040915
Subject: AUSTIN MBISA
TAGS: SHUM, PDIP, OVIP, MI, (BANDA, H KAMUZU), (MBISA, AUSTIN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/58f627ad-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014